



PROVISION FOR POST PROJECT EVALUATIONS FOR THE UNITED NATIONS
DEMOCRACY FUND
Contract NO.PD:C0110/10

EVALUATION REPORT



UDF-ALB-08-264 ±Empowering peopl H W K U R X J K F L W L J H Q V I J A N A R X U Q D O L

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All errors and omissions remain the responsibility of the authors.

Disclaimer

The views expressed in this report are those of the evaluators. They do4(o)13(r)8 1 275cU14ci2F70.82t3(i)

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I. Executive Summary

(i) Project Data

According to the project document, the *Empowering People Through Albania* project sought to strengthen the outreach of civil society organizations (CSOs) representing socially vulnerable groups to the community through citizen journalism. This was intended to be done by 1) equipping CSOs with public communication skills, 2) establishing a community radio station and a web portal at Tirana University, and 3) training students to report on socially relevant topics. The target groups were to be at least 12 CSOs working with vulnerable groups and 20 journalism students from the University of Tirana.

This 180,000 USD project¹ was implemented by the Institute for Democracy, Media and Cultural Exchange (IDEM) based in Germany, with in-country logistic support provided by IRIOM, an Albanian non-governmental organization (NGO) based in Tirana. The project ran from 1 November 2009 to 31 December 2011. This timeframe included a two month no-cost time extension. The main activities intended to be done under the project were to:

- Establish a community (campus) radio station and web portal at the University of Tirana and a core team to run it;

- Identify and train students and Tirana-based CSOs working on social issues through three public for a and six training courses on media production and communication skills;

- Prepare and air six programmes on socially relevant themes produced by CSO

afford, and it has shown a general lack of interest in covering social issues as part of the news. The CSOs that participated through their volunteers did work for the interests of marginalized groups. These included battered women, children in need, the Roma people, and those with HIV/AIDS. The CSOs themselves were extremely interested in obtaining access to media, especially one that was free of charge and could reach a national audience as was intended with the university radio in Tirana. Participating youth were interested in citizen journalism and reporting on social issues, but the number of active participants beyond initial training or awareness raising appears to have been limited, especially in light of the large number of university students in Tirana and Elbasan. Risks were accurately identified but not adequately addressed in the conceptualization of the project in regards to broadcast licensing and the continued participation of the University of Tirana. This required a reworking of the implementation plan after the project had started.

The project only partially reached its objectives as stated in its results framework. In addition to the setbacks related to the licensing, the CSO strengthening element focused on strengthening the skills of youth volunteers which resulted in individual strengthening rather than institutional. The choice of the University of Elbasan as an alternative to the University of Tirana seemed to be appropriate as it had a functioning student-run radio and an interested dean who participated in some of the project's trainings and development of material. The awareness raising efforts for the radio and its programmes seems to have been effective, as according to the project's baseline data, awareness of You Radio increased 53 percent from March 2010 to November 2011 among the project's target group (mainly youth under 25). However, without the grounding of the project around the running of a community/campus radio, the project's activities seemed intermittent and scattered which limited their effectiveness and potential impact. The project did not develop synergies with other efforts in the sector, which included another UNDEF-funded media project and a youth radio funded by other

II. Introduction and development context

(i) The project and evaluation objectives

The Empowering People Through Citizens' Journalism in Tirana/Albania project was a two-year USD 180,000 project implemented by the Institute for Democracy, Media and Cultural Exchange (IDEM) based in Germany, with in-country logistical support provided by IRIOM, an Albanian NGO based in Tirana. The project ran from 1 November 2009 to 31 December 2011 which included a two month no-cost time extension. Of the USD 180,000, IDEM received USD 162,000 and UNDEF retained USD 18,000 for evaluation and monitoring. The project sought to strengthen the outreach of civil society organizations (CSOs) representing socially vulnerable groups to the community through citizen journalism. This was intended to be done by 1) equipping CSOs with public communication skills, 2) establishing a community

social networking, entertainment and information (in that order). Much fewer listened to the radio, and only 7 percent of those listened to radio news. The most credible sources of information were reported to be teachers and schools, followed closely by books and the internet.⁸

Albania's civil society sector is still weak and has difficulties finding space for meaningful activities in a highly politicized environment.⁹ Cooperation between the media and CSOs is more present on political issues than for other issues, however the Civicus study found that this cooperation politicized concerns and debates which were often counterproductive for citizen participation.¹⁰ CSOs do have access to mainstream media, however as most of the stations are commercial this requires payment for airtime as their interest in covering social issues as part of the news is low. Many CSOs are struggling to survive financially and are dependent on volunteer labour and short-term project funding. This contributes to the lack of sustainability of impact for their efforts.

III.

(ii) Logical framework

ESTABLISH A COMMUNITY (CAMPUS) RADIO AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TIRANA

Obtain license for station	Sustainable on-air campus radio station established	Increased access for youth and CSOs to media	Increase youth and CSO voice
Purchase equipment for station	On-air campus radio station established catering to needs of urban community	Increased access for youth and CSOs to media	Increase youth and CSO voice
Selection and training of core radio team	Core team selected and trained Core team develops contacts in CSO community	Increased access for youth and CSOs to media Core team able to train further CSOs outside Tirana	Increase youth and CSO voice
Development of web portal	Web portal based on broadcast programmes	Increased access for youth and CSOs to media	Increase youth and CSO voice

IV. Evaluation findings

(i) Relevance

The programme design and anticipated outputs/outcomes were relevant. There are difficulties in Albania for youth and NGOs to access the media, voice their opinion and raise social issues. Although the Albanian media are free, mainstream media require payment for airtime that NGOs cannot afford, and have shown a general lack of interest in covering social issues as part of the news. Journalism classes are also mainly lectures with little opportunity for students to practice newly learned skills. Creating a functioning radio station and web portal there would have been a good means to provide those students with the tools to practice their craft and give a channel to university youth and participating CSOs to voice their opinions and cover issues of interest.

The CSOs that participated either directly or through student volunteers did represent the interests of marginalized and socially vulnerable groups or issues. These included battered

- CSO Participants
- 1.Center for a Roma Contemporary Vision
 2. Another Vision
 3. Progress and Civilisation
 4. STOP AIDS
 5. Soroptimist international
 6. ALTERNATIVA
 7. CEAPAL
 8. Albanian Center for Population and Development
 9. ADRA
 10. Democracy School (Shkolla Demokratike)
 11. Shendet 2000
 12. Association for Protecting and Preserving the Natural Environment

women, children in need, the Roma people, and those with HIV/AIDS. The CSOs themselves were extremely interested in the project's approach to media, which they saw as helping them to become an actor inside the media instead of being portrayed by the media, and at times, misinterpreted or sensationalized by it. They were also extremely interested in obtaining access to media, especially one that was free of charge and reached a national audience as anticipated with a Tirana-based radio. Reach was more limited with the switch to the provincial radio in Elbasan and an internet-based platform in Tirana. This reduced the project's relevance for some of the CSOs. The project compensated by purchasing airtime to broadcast each of the 24 programmes

produced on a national FM radio station (Ora) which the CSOs found useful. Some CSOs also felt their opportunities to benefit from the skills training beyond the participation of their student volunteers was limited which affected relevance for their organization.

The participating university youth also felt the project was relevant given the relatively new nature of citizen journalism and the lack of opportunities they felt were available to them to express their opinion and voice. Relevance of the project beyond the introductory meetings and awareness raising for other students is uncertain as the number of active participants in the project appeared limited given the potential pool of university students in Tirana and Elbasan. One of the presenters felt students were apathetic, saying the room was half empty and should have been full. One of the students suggested the programme needed to be trendier to attract more participants. However, the project only targeted 20 youth for capacity building, a target which it exceeded, and the photos for the sharing of project experiences at Elbasan showed a good turnout.

Risks were not adequately addressed in the project design. Although they were accurately identified there was no alternative strategy developed as a fall back, specifically regarding

the continued participation of the University of Tirana as an implementing partner and the ability to obtain a broadcast license for a campus station. As these were the basis for the project, the implementation plan needed to be rework5.58(r)-3(e)ct



YouRadio Logo

User statistics are only available for 2012 as records of the 2010 and 2011 data were not kept, but the 2012 data shows the number of visitors to the website ranged from 228 visitors in February 2012 to a high of 796 in May 2012. The detailed user statistics for May show that 44 percent of the users got to the web pages through an internet search engine, while 12 percent used its



Training Manual

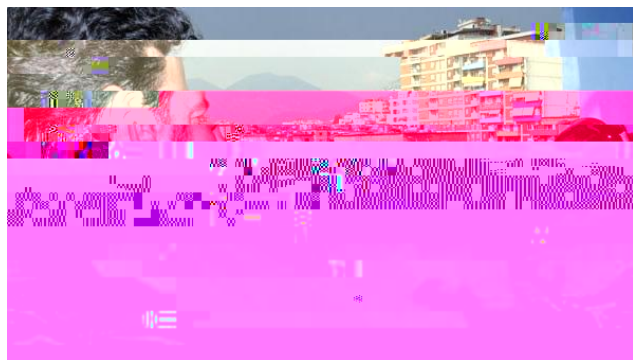
UNESCO manual on community radio. This manual was distributed to students in Elbasan and in Tirana.

The project also provided a radio technician who provided almost individualized training for about 20-25 students who were interested in the technical aspects of radio broadcasting. The study tour exposed the students to university and other media in Germany as a model for professional journalism and social responsibility. The students also met with a member of the German Bundestag (Viola von Cramon-Taubadel). But holding this in the last month of the project (Month 26) instead of in Month 18 as intended limited its programmatic usefulness for the project as the activities had already been completed.

Project Trainings & Workshops

Jan 18 - 21, 2010:	Workshop with German media expert on establishing UT radio portal
May 25-28, 2010:	Partnerships, stereotypes, rights/responsibilities, messaging, 14 persons Tirana
May 31, 2010:	Discussion
July 5, 2010:	Discussion
June 19, 2010:	YouRadio Launch event.
Aug 23-26, 2010:	ICT, Media & Social Participation of Youth in a Democracy . 14 persons Tirana
Sept 21, 2010:	Discussion
Oct 15, 2010:	Discussion
Nov 22-25, 2010:	Stereotypes, hate speech, storytelling & interview techniques. 14 persons Elbasan
Nov 26-29, 2010:	Features & reports vs. commentary. 14 persons Tirana
Jan-July 2011:	Airing of programmes on Ora FM (1/2 hour 1x week)
Jun 29 - July 2 2011:	New Citizens as Global Player, reporting on social issues. 12 persons Tirana.
Oct 10, 2011:	Presentation workshop on project activities at Marlin Barleti University

The approach of strengthening CSOs through student volunteers reflected IDEM's approach and philosophy – that students are active as volunteers in Europe and strengthening them, strengthens the CSOs they volunteer for. IDEM also felt the students would serve as replicators for the training by informing other students. However, if the purpose was to strengthen CSOs as was stated in the project document, this was not an effective approach. It reached the student volunteers, but not in most cases to the organization, and any benefits accrued in terms of strengthening was with the individual students rather than the CSO.



Doriana Veshi from the University in Elbasan, who also volunteered for the Roma organization & produced that radio programme

Adding the University of Elbasan as an alternative to the University of Tirana seems to have been a strategic choice.

It was a relatively large public

university with a functioning campus radio and a committed dean with demonstrated interest in citizen journalism. He was also tapped as a project lecturer and although he did not consider himself as such because of the intermittent nature of his work with the project, IDEM/IRIOM saw him as one of the core team.

The project did not work with other efforts in the sector that might have provided synergies and increased effectiveness. As an example, another UNDEF-funded media project was running in Albania in year 1 of this project.¹⁵ It had training programmes on investigatory journalism and professional standards, and produced broadcasts on issues of community and national importance with which this project could have linked to exchange programming and training opportunities. There was also Radio Aktive, an independent radio funded by the National Endowment for Democracy and the Open Society Foundation run by the NGO Mjaff. It was intended to provide citizens a voice and raise awareness on civic and social issues. It aired daily reports from youth, including journalism students from the University of Tirana who served as reporters. It also created an online radio portal “Radiostation.”¹⁶ UNICEF also funded “Speak Out” (TROC) which supported younger students in Albania (13-18) to produce a weekly show broadcast on the national public TV station. It trained youth in reporting and supplied technical equipment to 11 bureaus across Albania. They produced 150 reports giving the youth perspective on a broad range of issues.¹⁷ There were many synergies that could have been developed between these initiatives as well as with the Albanian media and elected officials as was done in the German study tour.

(iii) Efficiency

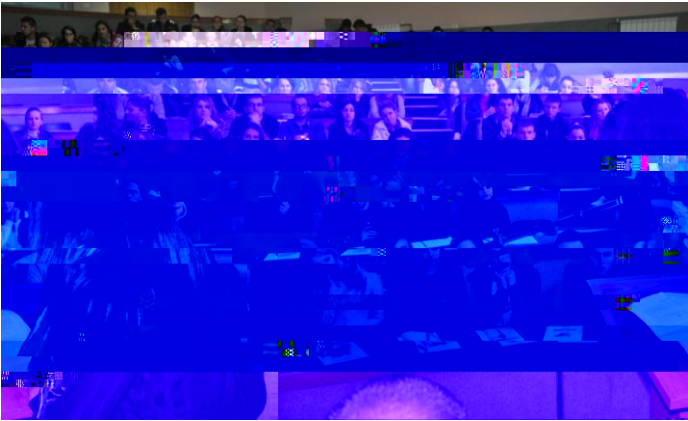
evaluators they had seen the project summary, but not the results framework or complete programme description which would be expected for an implementing partner.

The technical expert also appeared to have put in more work than was anticipated for the same reasons. He also seemed to have taken on the responsibility for supervising and managing the in-country funds and IRIOM staff's activities even though these were not included in his contract. He provided the two IRIOM staff with cash advances for operating costs which they reconciled on the basis of receipts. The funds for the national experts seemed to have been used more as honoraris than as experts' fees, but according to IDEM this was in line with the project budget. IRIOM also appeared to efficiently leverage the volunteer system in Albania to get representation for CSOs among university students, and for them to volunteer their time to present their activities at seminars and other events. However, as noted the evaluation is not able to verify the programmatic costs for this project for the reasons already discussed.

Reporting systems also appeared to be informal in nature with information passed orally or through e-mails. IRIOM provided 1-2 page activity reports or copies of the agenda to IDEM for the main events, but there seemed to be no system of written quarterly or annual reporting by consultants, contractors, or IRIOM, or by IDEM that captured all of the aspects of the project to that date, tracked project progress, use of funds or activity outputs. There was no performance monitoring plan with the exception of contracting an outside company to undertake the short baseline survey to have measured awareness of YouRadio, and the holding of milestone events which IDEM saw as a monitoring checklist verified by an outside auditing firm contracted by UNDEF.

Required reporting to UNDEF was tardy for both the midterm and final reports. This delayed the release of the second tranche of funding and required a time extension in order to complete the project. The inefficiencies in reporting affected project performance as activities lost momentum when pushed back. IDEM still had not submitted its final financial report as of the end of the evaluation. This is required for IDEM to receive its final tranche of project funding. These issues were discussed with IDEM. It felt that it had complied with all of UNDEF's reporting requirements, had sufficient project management systems in place and had submitted the necessary reporting on its activities with the exception of the financial report which its auditor will prepare. Despite repeated reminders from UNDEF, IDEM stated that it did not realize that they had to submit the final report to UNDEF within a given amount of time and had been busy on another project in the interim.

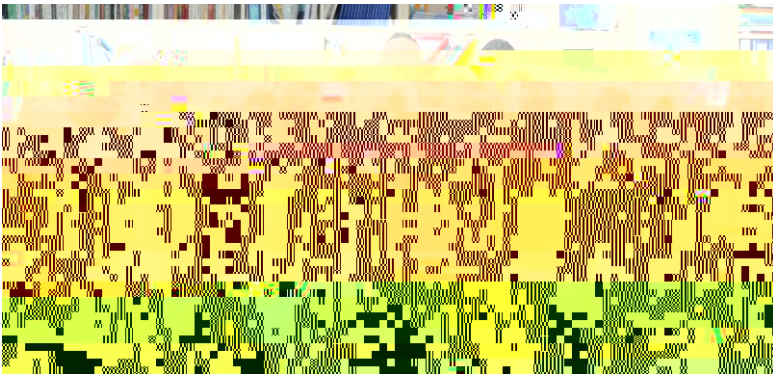
Project efficiency was also affected by not having ironed out the issues with the licensing and participation of the University of Tirana as a project implementer in the design phase. The Dean said she had been pursuing the idea of starting a university TV and radio for students to run when she learned about the IDEM idea for a campus radio station and felt they could be complementary activities. They agreed to work together and the Dean reportedly sent a letter of



Sharing information on the project in Elbasan

commitment to IDEM stating her intention to participate in the project. She had also applied for and received a government grant from World Bank funds for 75,000€ but said when no

company bid on the tender the funds had to be returned to the government. Their participation was also apparently dependent upon being able to set up the radio station which was not possible without a license. The University also felt it did not have reliable enough internet to host an internet portal and radio. As a result, the University of Tirana did not act as an implementing partner as stated in the project document. The project then linked with the



Producers of the YouRadio programmes

Impact of the YouRadio station and the programmes aired is unknown. The baseline study on the station showed a 46 percent increase in listeners for YouRadio from March 2010 to November 2011, and that 33 percent of these heard podcasts and 20 percent heard them on Ora FM radio. The most preferred shows were those on the economy (14 percent of those who responded), health (13.8 percent), science (10.3 percent), environment (8 percent) and social sector (7.4 percent). The survey did not measure what the listeners had taken away from the programmes, or the differences in awareness/knowledge between project participants and other youth on social/community media or on the social issues raised in the programmes. The project did not have the 2010 or 2011 website statistics so it is not possible to draw inferences on the extent the programmes were accessed or heard during the



Students developing their programme

universities spoke of incorporating aspects of the project's training manual and on community radio into their communications curriculum. If this is done, then the principles expressed in the training will be replicated in classes to come.

As noted, the targets for the project were extremely modest especially for a training and voice programme that was to include a community radio with reach to the wider community. Aiming so low probably already limits the chances to make a catalytic effect unless the individuals targeted are opinion leaders or agents of change. The project appears to have far exceeded its targets in terms of the general training although the numbers and types of attendees were not tracked or recorded. Impact is likely to have been greater had the project gone as planned, with the programme implemented by and grounded in a university and its community radio. Without it, the activities were scattered and intermittent which limited the project's potential impact. The audience for internet radio is also limited and users have to be pro-active to access it.

The study tour to Berlin and Dusseldorf was at the end of the project. This was too late to benefit the project, but it was an enriching experience for the youth participants. The two participants from Elbasan and three from Tirana felt it gave them an opportunity to see how the media worked outside of Albania. The trip appeared to have given the youth new ideas and insights in to the meaning of independent reporting and citizen journalism and where the media worked in service for the community.

Impact on the journalism students is hard to judge as it is unclear how many students reached were journalism students. Many of the participating students were not journalism students as IDEM wanted to open the idea of citizen journalism up to a wider group of students at the universities. There did seem to be an impact made on the Albanian lecturers and journalists who participated in the project. They felt they had learned new training methods from the technical experts who had a more direct and interactive approach than

(vii) Project management was too informal for an international development project and only worked as well as it did because of the small scale nature of the project and the good personal relations between IDEM and IRIOM, and between them and the experts they recruited. But the lack of formal systems affected the programmatic aspects of the project as well as the administrative/reporting sides. This conclusion follows from findings (ii), (iii) and (iv).

(viii) The project made a difference for the core participants and participating institutions. It seems to have increased their awareness of citizen journalism, was personally empowering for some students, and created a youth internet radio portal which will be available for students at Marlin Barleti to use in the coming years. However, the extent of this impact is unknown due to the lack of tracking and evaluation data. This conclusion follows from findings (ii), (iv) and (v).

VI. Recommendations

To strengthen similar projects in the future, the team recommends:

(i) Similar projects be ground firmly in a university communications department and become part of the regular i b]j Yfg]m]g' dfc[fUa a]b[. As a community radio, the radio should remain open for access by the community as well as by students, by dedicating a certain percentage of airtime for broader community access. The university should be the implementing partner. This recommendation follows from conclusions (i) and (iv).

(ii) Ensure project objectives and outcomes are clear and are accurately reflected in the project document and results framework. The project purpose should drive the project and guide the selection of activities, participants and locations. All of the activities should contribute directly towards achieving that project purpose. This recommendation follows conclusions (ii) (iv) and (v).

(iii) Fully discuss and negotiate the details for major partnerships intended in a project before the proposal is finalized and submitted to the donor. The written agreements of understanding that detail the roles and responsibilities of each should be attached as part of the proposal. The feasibility of obtaining major elements required for a project, such as a broadcast license, should also be determined, and the initial steps also initiated to obtain that element

the students and base skill training on the assessed needs of each group, which are likely to vary within groups. This recommendation follows from conclusion (v).

(vi) Where CSO strengthening is an objective, CSO staff should be included in training opportunities as well as their individual volunteers. The staff adds the institutional element that will help to ensure that the knowledge and skills transferred during training remain with the organization after the end of the project. CSOs are also able to replicate the project activities and use the new skills in their daily work to improve their institutional performance and impact. This recommendation follows from conclusion (ii) and (iv).

(vii) Grantees should ensure that donor-funded projects have basic project management systems in place that include regular written reporting requirements for all

VIII. Limitations, constraints and caveats

The evaluation took place eight months after the end of the project and relied on project documents and interviews to make its assessments. Project reporting was general and the final report lacked specific information on outputs and outcomes. The project's final financial report was also not available as of the end of the evaluation.

IX. ANNEXES

Annex 1: Evaluation questions:

DAC criterion	Evaluation Question	Related sub -questions
Relevance	To what extent was the project, as designed and implemented, suited to context and needs at the beneficiary, local, and national levels?	<p>Were the objectives of the project in line with the needs and priorities for democratic development, given the context?</p> <p>Should another project strategy have been preferred rather than the one implemented to better reflect those needs, priorities, and context? Why?</p> <p>Were risks appropriately identified by the projects? How appropriate are/were the strategies developed to deal with identified risks? Was the project overly risk-averse?</p>
Effectiveness	To what extent was the project, as implemented, able to achieve objectives and goals?	To what extent have the project's objectives been reached?

Annex 2: Documents Reviewed:

Civicus, IDM, UNDP: Civil Society Index for Albania, In Search of Citizens and Impact, 2010

DeliCast, Albania, Radio- Community, <http://delicast.com/radio/Albania/community/t:10/3>

Freedom House, Nations in Transition: Albania 2012, <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2012/albania>

Institute for Democracy, *Media and Cultural Exchange, Projects*: http://www.idem-institute.org/eng/index.php?l=wwt_pr

IRES, Media Sustainability Index 2012, Albania, 2012

Open Society Institute, *Mapping Digital Media: Albania*, January 2012

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Progress and Civilization Organization, *YouRadio-Citizen Journalism: Evaluation Study Report*, December 2011

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Reporters Without Borders, World Press Freedom Index 2011-2012,
http://en.rsf.org/IMG/CLASSEMENT_2012/C_GENERAL_ANG.pdf
UDF-ALB-08-264, *alism, Final Project Narrative Report*,
August 2012

UDF-ALB-08-264, , September
2009

UDF-ALB-08-264, - *Development of*
the radio program II. 2 December 2010

UDF-ALB-08-264, , October 2011.
UDF-ALB-08-264,

Dr. Pani, IRIOM, F. Lohmaier

UDF-ALB-08-264, copies of newspaper and other
advertisements

UDF-ALB-08-264, Manual Praktick Per Gazetaret e
Radios

UDF-ALB-08-264, *Empowering people through citizen* Presentations for Marlin Barleti 15

October 2011; for University of Elbasan November 23, 2011,
UDF-ALB-08-264, Agreement between IRIOM and
Marlin

Annex 3: Persons Interviewed

12 August 2012	
Arrival, international consultant	
13 August 2012	
Elda Hallkaj	Project staff (programme), IRIOM
Klodiana Collaku	Project staff (administrative), IRIOM
Agim Bulku	Technical advisor (radio) and trainer
Irida Agolli	Coordinator, Alternative Center (NGO)
Visit to IRIOM project office and YouRadio set up	
Adriana Berberi	Managing Director University of Marlin Barleti
Dr. Artan Puto	Director Albanian Institute for Public Affairs, University of Marlin Barleti
Erion Kristo	PR Students Union Office, University of Marlin Barleti
Silio Stefani	Radio Technician, University of Marlin Barleti

Visit to University of Marlin Barleti's, Communications department and ra

Annex 4 : Acronyms

CSO	Civil Society Organization
IDEM	Institute for Democracy, Media and Cultural Exchange
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
UNDEF	United Nations Democracy Fund
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund